in in front, on which the sticks rest the fashion & mind of those pans & at the back a fire-iron plate on which were two figures, an old woman & young man, or young woman, affectionately embracing, & casting lingering loving looks behind at the fire, before apparently they marched up chimney. But the large back, Sue, made me think of the Duchesse de Berri & her place of refuge. The shovel & tongs would have done to send to a museum of antiquities. And yet the room was a queer mixture of splendour & shabby; the red tiled floor, a rocking in the middle, was so uneven it made me half giddy to cross it, & the chairs seemed as if they would fall apart if moved. We decided, as the rain still came down, to give up our plan of taking a carriage to the Pont du Gard & so to Nismes, & to take only a drive round the town & then railway to Tarascon, & Nismes for the night. So we paid the bill to the polite landlady & departed. When the popes lived at Avignon, the papal palace & cathedral were built on a rock in the middle of the ~~[illegible]~~ town, & the city surrounded by a wall dating [illegible] to Roman times, which still remains. The streets to ascend to the Cathedral are only wide enough for two carriages just to pass, in some not even that, no side-walks, paved with round stones, foot passengers must beware. Some stately, ancient houses, with massive doors & iron-barred windows, skirted them, & then came castle wall & rock, one could hardly tell where one ended & the other began

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13.

Montpellier. Nov. 26th. 68

My dear Sue,

Thanksgiving day with you all. As it is 4 P.M. here, I suppose if I allow for the hours later than we are, I may suppose you dining, where? Are you all alone as usual? Here are we in the South of France, among quite new scenes, & a climate that does not remind one at all of the last of Nov. at home. Dear home! I did not think until we were on our way from Paris, that it was Thanksgiving this week, or I should have been tempted to try to pass it together. But Dr. Gray was so eager to get to this neighbourhood, I doubt would he have been persuaded. So perhaps it is as well.

We left Paris Tuesday Eve. at 7½, running away from Charles, it fairly seemed. But my husband had finished his work there, & the season is not a tempting one, & visions were before him of all to be seen here, & our only chance, probably, so if we came. You may wonder at our coming by night, but the trains are curiously arranged here, the only very quick one goes [illegible] stops, one must wait 24 hours to take [illegible] in the day, or awfully early in the morning, or the middle of the night— It was a difficult matter to manage, as you would have thought if you had heard the discussions over the R.R. Guide, until I dreaded the sight of it— Besides the country is, they say, dreary & lone & dreary, especially at this season, between Paris & Lyons, & everyone who can goes by night— The carriages are warmed by hot water tins covered with carpet, changed almost too often, keeping one's feet like a hot poultice; & the seats are very comfortably stuffed. We had only four women in our compartment for 8, & so were not crowded, & I slept soundly— At the stations one was always waked by the loud call of the name, & "trois minutes d'arret," or "cinq minutes," or "vingt minutes," so one could get out if they chose— At Lyons at 6 in the morning Dr. Gray got me a bowl of soup with some slices of toasted roll in it, quite refreshing, & we reached Avignon about 9— But the famed French rail-ways are not perfect in their arrangements— they will not allow, as with us, to stop en route, & go on later; You must take your ticket to where you go, & [illegible] & buy anew to go on; baggage the same, & that must be weighed when your ticket is got, & overweight paid. & a paper account delivered, & lots of red [illegible] seen; so it is slow work getting off on a French train— Then you are all shut in a room, of many passengers, & not allowed to go near the train until all the comers are discharged; & if it is up-stairs or any distance, it is a rush with bag-laden, feeble folks— Then many places the train drops you in the mud, or else you must wade through to reach omnibus or fiacre; & the salles d'attente are filled with tobacco-smokers, & a most mixed crowd—, & the accommodations are abominable. English roads are better, & more attentive guards, only there is nothing like baggage checks— And for quick & easy accommodation of a crowd, I think ours the best—

I was tired & rather cross when we reached Avignon; & am afraid the chrysanthemums & roses in bloom in the little squares & gardens were rather lost upon me as we rode to the Hotel— But after a thé complet, & Dr. Gray went to table d'hote breakfast, I was revived enough to notice the large, quaint chamber, looking as if it had been furnished 70 years ago; & especially to observe the fire-place, old, of white marble, low & long, surmounted by a [illegible] handsome clock under a glass shade, vases ditto, a pair of heavy plated candle-sticks, & a large mirror above— Below, the fire-place was tiled into the deep sides, no andirons, but iron shelves coming out on each side & rounding

[illegible]

[illegible] such [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] 100 [illegible]

[illegible] crated –

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] but they are bare now of leaves —

We reached [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

We naked [illegible], & such a sky so blue & clear [illegible]! [illegible] out in the [illegible] [illegible] fine [illegible] [illegible] the middle [illegible] beautiful [illegible]

amphitheatre,
Roman [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] served and [illegible] [illegible], we [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] in pairs on the sound [illegible], [illegible] the finest & most delicate soup, (& rice with rice), [illegible] of fish [illegible], [illegible] cakes, turbot, [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] truffles, beans, thist stalks stewed [illegible], salad, [illegible] cream [illegible] Charlotte, crème [illegible] then dessert — [illegible] apples, little [illegible], bonbons, [illegible], [illegible], [illegible], &c, & [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], except the dessert — [illegible] [illegible] nice to, [illegible] of the country, & [illegible], Bordeaux — [illegible] immense [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] each thing, & we [illegible] [illegible] at [illegible] [illegible] we [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]! [illegible] refuse second time of one [illegible], the [illegible] [illegible] — The [illegible] [illegible] it [illegible] connected with the University, & the Chancellor [illegible] istry, dined with us. Mm. Martin & Lauchon speak English, but Madame [illegible] — I could easily understand Mr. Martin's ~~German~~ French, but not at all Chancel's. And when the conversation [illegible] very lively & animated [illegible] & much — Gentlemen & ladies left the table together & [illegible] was served up stairs — We had a very pleasant [illegible]. [illegible] went back with us to our [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of which [illegible], [illegible] is 300 [illegible] & has many interesting stories connected with it. [illegible] is an old [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in [illegible] — [illegible] of [illegible] have

[illegible] indeed

you

[illegible] 6

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] were [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible], but [illegible]

[illegible] ancient [illegible]

[illegible]

Friday we [illegible]

[illegible] more [illegible]

& [illegible] — It is a very choice collection, the best [illegible] the [illegible] from the [illegible] connection of the Countess of [illegible], the [illegible]'s [illegible] & [illegible] who originally came from [illegible] [illegible] rich citizen bequeathed some treasures of the Dutch School, & of [illegible], &c., & now the director is [illegible] very valuable specimens of the modern French schools very different, some beautiful, some [illegible], some ugly, [illegible] — I was interested in the studies & contrasts [illegible] has had his portrait painted by 20, I should think, thus contrasting [illegible] Among the [illegible] we saw a wonderful [illegible], [illegible] "grand [illegible]," "in [illegible] pearls" & "[illegible]," [illegible], Emerald's landscape, [illegible], &c —

[illegible] & we sent to Mr. Martin. Madme. received [illegible] [illegible] — but [illegible]

[illegible]